

CHECKLIST ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

Project Name:	Turner Enterprises Fence Request 2019
Proposed Implementation Date:	Spring, 2019
Proponent:	Turner Enterprises Inc., Lessee
Location:	T8S R4W Section 36
County:	Madison County, Montana

I. TYPE AND PURPOSE OF ACTION

The lessee of the Trust Land in Section 36, T8S R4W has made a request to construct approximately 0.8 miles of 2 strand smooth wire electric fence. The 2 strand high tensile electric fence configuration would consist of wire spacing at approximately 42" top wire and 26" bottom wire. Brace posts would be fabricated using steel pipe. 3 wire gates would be installed for access and the fence would be constructed to allow for let-downs or bunching of the 2 wires at important wildlife crossing points. The line posts would be 1.25" fiberglass at approximately 45' spacing. Both wires would be electrified when grazing the pasture using a solar powered fence charger. The top and third wires would be intended to carry electricity for containment of livestock.

II. PROJECT DEVELOPMENT

1. PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT, AGENCIES, GROUPS OR INDIVIDUALS CONTACTED: <i>Provide a brief chronology of the scoping and ongoing involvement for this project.</i>
--

Dean Waltee, Wildlife Biologist for the Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife, & Parks – Sheridan,
Patrick Rennie, Archaeologist for the Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation.
Montana Natural Heritage Program
Tony Schoonen, Skyline Sportsman's Association

2. OTHER GOVERNMENTAL AGENCIES WITH JURISDICTION, LIST OF PERMITS NEEDED:
--

No other agencies jurisdiction or need of additional permits were identified in scoping for this project.

3. ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED:

- 1) Allow construction of the fence
- 2) Do not allow construction of the fence

III. IMPACTS ON THE PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

- *RESOURCES potentially impacted are listed on the form, followed by common issues that would be considered.*
- *Explain POTENTIAL IMPACTS AND MITIGATIONS following each resource heading.*
- *Enter "NONE" if no impacts are identified or the resource is not present.*

4. GEOLOGY AND SOIL QUALITY, STABILITY AND MOISTURE: <i>Consider the presence of fragile, compactable or unstable soils. Identify unusual geologic features. Specify any special reclamation considerations. Identify any cumulative impacts to soils.</i>
--

This proposed fencing project includes very little ground disturbance in an area of shallow soils (along ridge line) with 1.25" fiberglass posts pounded in approximately every 45 feet along with occasional 4" steel pipe brace posts. Impacts to soils on the site would be minimal.

5. WATER QUALITY, QUANTITY AND DISTRIBUTION:

Identify important surface or groundwater resources. Consider the potential for violation of ambient water quality standards, drinking water maximum contaminant levels, or degradation of water quality. Identify cumulative effects to water resources.

No important water resources are located in the proposed project vicinity.

6. AIR QUALITY:

What pollutants or particulate would be produced? Identify air quality regulations or zones (e.g. Class I air shed) the project would influence. Identify cumulative effects to air quality.

The proposed project would not alter air quality in the area.

7. VEGETATION COVER, QUANTITY AND QUALITY:

What changes would the action cause to vegetative communities? Consider rare plants or cover types that would be affected. Identify cumulative effects to vegetation.

The vegetative community would not be altered as a result of this proposed project. Current vegetative community is dominated by native perennial bunchgrasses such as bluebunch wheatgrass, Idaho fescue on the North aspects, and needle-and-thread grass on Southern aspects along with juniper and some Douglas fir timber, and mountain big sagebrush. The existing plant community will not be altered by the completion of the proposed project.

8. TERRESTRIAL, AVIAN AND AQUATIC LIFE AND HABITATS:

Consider substantial habitat values and use of the area by wildlife, birds or fish. Identify cumulative effects to fish and wildlife.

No cumulative effects to fish and wildlife would occur as a result of this proposed project. The fence would be a 2 strand smooth wire electric fence with a 26" bottom wire and a 42" top wire. DFWP Biologist Dean Waltee was contacted by both TEI and Chuck Maddox for input on mitigating wildlife concerns. Dean felt the fence proposal would not hinder wildlife movement with the 2 smooth wire design, wide post spacing, gates, and ability to bunch wires together as needed in known wildlife crossing areas.

9. UNIQUE, ENDANGERED, FRAGILE OR LIMITED ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES:

Consider any federally listed threatened or endangered species or habitat identified in the project area. Determine effects to wetlands. Consider Sensitive Species or Species of special concern. Identify cumulative effects to these species and their habitat.

The Montana Natural Heritage Program (MNHP) website was checked regarding species of concern within and around the project area. Three species of concern were identified in the report and are listed below.

Grizzly Bear (*Ursus arctos*) – The project area borders known grizzly habitat of the Greenhorn Mountain Range. This population is part of the Yellowstone Distinct Population Segment (DPS). Design of the fence as proposed would not hinder movement by grizzlies. The project would not alter grizzly habitat and would not cause cumulative effects to the species.

Westslope Cutthroat Trout (*Oncorhynchus clarkii lewisi*) – Westslope cutthroat trout are currently listed as sensitive by both the US Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management, and the State of Montana. The proposed project would place a fence in an upland site in dry rangeland conditions outside of waterways. Trout habitat will not be significantly impacted by the fencing project.

Wolverine (*Gulo gulo*) - Wolverines have relatively continuous habitat within the Gravelly, Greenhorn and Snowcrest mountain ranges. This project falls outside the wolverine range by several miles. The BLM and US Forest Service list the wolverine as a sensitive species. Wolverines could and may pass through the state sections when moving between mountain ranges however the state sections do not provide the necessary

habitat for sustained use by wolverines at this location. Because of this, this project would not cause direct, indirect, or cumulative effects on this species and the area of this proposal is not considered prime habitat for wolverines.

10. HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES:

Identify and determine effects to historical, archaeological or paleontological resources.

Patrick Rennie, DNRC Archaeologist, was contacted regarding cultural resource listings for the tracts. Patrick checked the records and responded that there were no cultural resource concerns regarding the proposed project.

11. AESTHETICS:

Determine if the project is located on a prominent topographic feature, or may be visible from populated or scenic areas. What level of noise, light or visual change would be produced? Identify cumulative effects to aesthetics.

The proposed project is not on a prominent feature and would not alter the aesthetics of the area.

12. DEMANDS ON ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES OF LAND, WATER, AIR OR ENERGY:

Determine the amount of limited resources the project would require. Identify other activities nearby that the project would affect. Identify cumulative effects to environmental resources.

The project would not negatively affect the areas environmental resources.

13. OTHER ENVIRONMENTAL DOCUMENTS PERTINENT TO THE AREA:

List other studies, plans or projects on this tract. Determine cumulative impacts likely to occur as a result of current private, state or federal actions in the analysis area, and from future proposed state actions in the analysis area that are under MEPA review (scoped) or permitting review by any state agency.

No other studies, plans, or projects were reported to DNRC Dillon Unit from other agencies or individuals during the scoping process.

IV. IMPACTS ON THE HUMAN POPULATION

- *RESOURCES potentially impacted are listed on the form, followed by common issues that would be considered.*
- *Explain POTENTIAL IMPACTS AND MITIGATIONS following each resource heading.*
- *Enter "NONE" if no impacts are identified or the resource is not present.*

14. HUMAN HEALTH AND SAFETY:

Identify any health and safety risks posed by the project.

No health or safety risks would result from this proposed project.

15. INDUSTRIAL, COMMERCIAL AND AGRICULTURE ACTIVITIES AND PRODUCTION:

Identify how the project would add to or alter these activities.

The project would improve grazing management on the affected Trust Land and adjacent private land by allowing better utilization of the tracts.

16. QUANTITY AND DISTRIBUTION OF EMPLOYMENT:

Estimate the number of jobs the project would create, move or eliminate. Identify cumulative effects to the employment market.

The proposed project would not have cumulative effects on the employment market.

17. LOCAL AND STATE TAX BASE AND TAX REVENUES:

Estimate tax revenue the project would create or eliminate. Identify cumulative effects to taxes and revenue.

No tax revenue would be created or eliminated as a result of the approval of this project.

18. DEMAND FOR GOVERNMENT SERVICES:

Estimate increases in traffic and changes to traffic patterns. What changes would be needed to fire protection, police, schools, etc.? Identify cumulative effects of this and other projects on government services.

No additional government services would be required as a result of this proposed project.

19. LOCALLY ADOPTED ENVIRONMENTAL PLANS AND GOALS:

List State, County, City, USFS, BLM, Tribal, and other zoning or management plans, and identify how they would affect this project.

No other environmental plans or goals were reported during scoping for this document.

20. ACCESS TO AND QUALITY OF RECREATIONAL AND WILDERNESS ACTIVITIES:

Identify any wilderness or recreational areas nearby or access routes through this tract. Determine the effects of the project on recreational potential within the tract. Identify cumulative effects to recreational and wilderness activities.

The proposed project will not alter recreational activities on the tract.

21. DENSITY AND DISTRIBUTION OF POPULATION AND HOUSING:

Estimate population changes and additional housing the project would require. Identify cumulative effects to population and housing.

The proposed project will not alter populations or housing.

22. SOCIAL STRUCTURES AND MORES:

Identify potential disruption of native or traditional lifestyles or communities.

The proposed project would not disrupt local communities.

23. CULTURAL UNIQUENESS AND DIVERSITY:

How would the action affect any unique quality of the area?

The proposed project would not affect the unique qualities of the area.

24. OTHER APPROPRIATE SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC CIRCUMSTANCES:

Estimate the return to the trust. Include appropriate economic analysis. Identify potential future uses for the analysis area other than existing management. Identify cumulative economic and social effects likely to occur as a result of the proposed action.

There would be no monetary increase to the trust as a result of this proposed project. Potential benefits of the project, if completed, would be improved management in controlling livestock utilization of upland rangeland sites. T8S R4W Section 36 is Common Schools Grant.

EA Checklist Prepared By:	Name: Chuck Maddox	Date: 4/15/2019
	Title: Land Use Specialist	

V. FINDING

25. ALTERNATIVE SELECTED:

Alternative 1. Allow construction of the fence.

26. SIGNIFICANCE OF POTENTIAL IMPACTS:

No significant impacts are anticipated from this proposal.

27. NEED FOR FURTHER ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS:

EIS More Detailed EA No Further Analysis

EA Checklist Approved By:	Name: Timothy Egan
	Title: Dillon Unit Manager
Signature: /s/ Timothy Egan	
Date: 4/17/2019	